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SACHEVERELL

THE COMMUNICATION
OF SIN

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The Communication of Sin :

A

SERMON

PREACH'D at the

Affizes held at *DERBY*,

AUGUST 15th 1709.

By *HENRY SACHEVERELL*, D.D.
Fellow of *Magdalen-College*, Oxon, and Chap-
lain of *St. Saviour's*, Southwark.

Publish'd at the Request of the Gentlemen of the
GRAND-JURY.

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To the Right Worshipful
George Sacheverell, Esq;
High-Sheriff of the County of *DERBY*,
AND TO
The Honourable Gentlemen of the
GRAND-JURY.

Gilbert Thacker, Esq;
Robert Wilmot, Esq;
John Fitz-Herbert Esq;
John Beresford, Esq;
Henry Vernon, Esq;
William Cook, Esq;
William Cavendish Esq;
Francis Pole, Esq;

William Horton, Esq;
George Savill, Esq;
William Brown, Esq;
Paul Balledon, Esq;
James Chetham, Esq;
William Woolley, Esq;
George Turner, Gent.

GENTLEMEN,

THE Peculiar Honour you were pleas'd to confer upon me after the delivery of this plain Discourse, was so Signal, that nothing less than this Publick Acknowledgment can acquit Me of Ingratitude.

Now, when the Principles, and Interests, of our Church, and Constitution, are so shamefully Betray'd, and Run Down, it can be no little Comfort to all those who Wish their Welfare and Security, to see, that notwithstanding the secret Malice, and Open Violence they are Persecuted with, there are still to be found such Worthy Patrons of both, who dare Own and Defend them as well against the Rude and Presumptuous Insults of the One Side, as the Base, Undermining Treachery of the Other; and who Scorn to
sit

The Dedication.

fit Silently by, *and* Partake in the Sins of *these* Associated Malignants.

Tho' the Truth seems to be so much For-
saken at present, yet God be thank'd, they
shall yet find to our Honour, that We have
still amongst Us those who have Courage to
Speak it, as well as those who have Lives and
Fortunes to Maintain it: And tho' the Age
is Sunk into the Lowest Dregs of Corrupti-
on, that it cannot endure Sound Doctrin,
there are not wanting Some to Preach it,
and Others to Support it, at the Expence
of Both. May the Influence of your Good
Examples, which as much Animates our
Friends, as it Terrifies our Enemies, be as
diffusively Prevailing, as 'tis nobly Conspi-
cuous, and the Blessing of that Church at-
tend you, which you so Eminently Adorn,
and Sustain!

And, as I am oblig'd by the Relation I
have the Honour to bear to your Family, may

a double Portion of Divine Favour rest on You, (Mr. HIGH-SHERIFF) whose Commands I was very ready to Execute in this Office, since you thought neither the Advancement of your Years, so generously Expended for the Good of your Country, nor the great Trouble attending this Post, sufficient to exempt you, from shewing that steady Loyalty and Zeal to serve Her Majesty and the Government, for which you have been so remarkably Distinguish'd.

I am with all Regard, Gentlemen,

Your very Humble Servant,

HENRY SACHEVERELL.

A
S E R M O N

P R E A C H ' D at the

Affizes at D E R B Y, &c.

I T I M. 5. *Part of the 22d. Verse.*

— Neither be Partaker of other Men's Sins.

W H E N St. *Paul*, by the peculiar Designation of the Holy Ghost, had Ordain'd *Timothy* Bishop of *Ephesus*, that he might not be wanting in sufficient Instructions for the Discharge of so Weighty and Sacred an Office, he sends him in this *Epistle* the Credentials of his Authority, with those Rules of Government for himself in his Private Life, together with those Canons of Ecclesiastical Discipline, which were absolutely necessary for the Publick due Administration of the Church of God. And to excite in him a full Sense of his Duty, and the great Danger of Neglecting or Abusing his High-
B Calling,

- V. 21. *Calling, the Apostle charges him before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Elect Angels, to consider that a double Burthen lay upon him, that he must answer for the Loss of all those other Souls committed to his Care at the Expence of his own; that he must be Responsible for their Guilt and Miscarriage, as his own proper Crimes; and that therefore he should act with all the strictest Vigilance and Circumspection in so momentous a Concern, and lay hands suddenly on no*
- V. 22. *Man: Which, whether understood of Absolution of Penitents, by that Ancient and Primitive Ceremony us'd in it, (as some Writers contend) or of Ordination, (as others) would involve him in all the ill Consequences of such a Rash and Precipitate Action, and make him Partaker of other Men's Sins.*

The Words however may be taken in an unrestrain'd Sense, as an excellent *Maxim* for the Conduct of Human Life in *General*; or as an Universal Prohibition of *Contributing* towards, *Concurring*, or *Complying* with, the wicked Practices of others, lest as we thereby become *Accomplices* in their *Iniquity*, we may be also *Sharers* in their *Guilt*, and *Fellow-Sufferers* in their *Punishment*. Under which unlimited Acceptation I shall proceed to discourse on the Text, and shall endeavour to shew,

I. *First*, How many Ways we may be *Partakers of other Men's Sins*. And,

II. *Secondly*, I will urge some particular *Motives* to deter us from falling under so great and dangerous a Guilt.

I. And *First*, I will shew how many Ways we may be *Partakers of other Men's Sins*. In order to the stating this Point clearly, I must beg leave to premise this Reflection, That all *Immoral Actions* may be consider'd under a *double View*, and consequently *divided* into *two Sorts*. Either first, such as are *Internal*, and *Personal*; or secondly, such as are *External*, and *Derivative*. Now as the *First* are *confin'd within* the Offendor, and transacted only betwixt God and our Consciences; so they extend their Guilt no farther than *the Man*, and are circumscrib'd within the *Bounds* of his *own Soul*. These Sins are of a restrain'd, and *Positive* Nature, and to be *measur'd* by their *Essential*, and *Intrinsical Malignity* alone. But the *Others* have, besides this, a *Relative Addition* of Guilt, drawn from all the mischievous *Effects*, and wicked *Consequences* that flow from them; according to which they *rise* in *proportion* of Impiety, *increase* in the *Degrees* of *Heinousness*, and *Aggravation*, and still *gather* as they are fur-

ther propagated, and advanc'd. And as they are acted in Conjunction, in this *Communion*, and *Society of Vice*, (as I may call it) *it grows fruitful, and multiplies*; and tho' the Sin consider'd in *itself* may be *Single*, and *Uncompounded*, yet with respect to the *Multitude* engag'd in it, it may be also of a *Complicated* Nature, as it's communicated Influence is transfus'd thro' several different Channels, which may all spring out of, run into, and joyn in *One Individual Body*. According to which Notion, any *Criminal Action* may distinguish all those that are *Confederate* in it's Commission, into these three several *Classes*; either *first*, as they are *Principal Agents* in it; or *secondly*, as they are *Accessories* to it; or *thirdly*, as they are *Privy* to it's Execution, by a *Tacit Compliance* with it, *wilful Neglect* of it, or *Omission* to prevent it. All which are to be consider'd as so many *Gradations* of Sin, charging the different Transgressor with an *Higher*, or *Lower* Imputation of Guilt, as he stands delinquent in either. But to render this Matter more fully evident, I will draw out, and exemplify these *General Heads* in some of the most Important and *Particular Cases* contain'd under them, to which the rest may be easily reduc'd. We may therefore be *Partakers of other Men's Sins*, either by,

1. *Commanding, or Commissioning their Execution.*
2. *Conniving at, Consenting to, or Concealing them.*
3. *Administ'ring Counsel, Direction, or Assistance towards them.*
4. *Commending, Approving, Excusing, or Defending them.*
5. *Giving Offence, or Scandalous Example.*
6. *Authorizing, Propagating, or Publishing any Heresy, False Doctrin, Schism, Faction, Irreligion, or Immorality.*

1. And First, We may partake of other Men's Sins, by *Commanding, or Commissioning their Execution.* This particularly respects all such as are invested with any *Jurisdiction, or Authority* over their *Inferiors*, all *Princes and Magistrates, Civil and Ecclesiastical, Masters and Governors, Parents and Guardians*, or any others that enjoy a *Right of Dominion or Discipline*, Granted and Establish'd by the Law, and a *Preeminence* requiring all *Allegiance and Subjection* to them in all things *Just and Honest.* Now tho' this *Sovereignty* is restrain'd within the *Rules of Justice and Equity*, of *Reason and Religion*, and no Power upon Earth can *Authorize, Justifie or Excuse* the *Violation* of them, there lying a *Superior, Indefeasible Obligation* that *exempts* all Men from an *Illegal or Usurp'd Obedience*; yet the controlling Sway, and overbearing

bearing Awe of *Force* and *Authority*, the affrighting and almost irresistible Terrors of *Threats* and *Punishments*, the dazzling *Glory* of *Wealth* and *Grandeur*, together with the persuasive Influence of *Interest* and *Ambition*, make great *Allowances* for *Flesh* and *Blood*, not easily capable in *itself*, without the merciful *Assistances* of *Divine Grace*, to struggle with, and vanquish such pressing Difficulties and Temptations; and therefore charge back a *double Portion* of *Guilt* upon those Persons who abuse their *Dominion* to base and sinful Purposes, who in *this Case* are to be consider'd as the *Principal Authors* of these Evils, as the *Prime Cause* and Original Ground-Spring from whence they flow. Not that this Reflection of a *Greater Degree* of *Guilt* upon the *Commander*, can wholly acquit the *Subordinate Transactor* of his, who knows he is Responsible to a much *Greater Master* and *Sovereign*. He must *share* his *Proportion*, and *bear his own Burden*, tho' of much *less Weight* than that of his *Superior*. It is observable that the *Roman Law* inclin'd very much in favour to such unhappy Persons as lay under these Disadvantages of *Power* and *Obligations*, whereby they were obnoxious to be compell'd to execute, or comply with any Injunction that might contradict their *Conscience*, or interfere with their *Justice* and *Integrity*, imputing the Offence chiefly to those under whose *Government* they acted as the adequate

quate and *Impulsive Cause* of the Crime, and true *Object* of the *Penalty*; esteeming the *Immediate Delinquents* to be properly *non sui Juris*, or capable *Judges* in the Case, and therefore not so much the *Authors* of Iniquity, as meer *Passive Machines*, directed by the Hands of Despotick and Overruling Managers. As doubtless the Strength of the *Temptation*, the Prevalence of *Inducements*, and the Want of *Liberty*, do very much *Extenuate* the Transgression in the *One*, so must it *proportionably Aggravate* that in the *Other*, in Perverting and Prostituting that Authority and *Sacred Trust* that was repos'd in him for the Promotion of *Virtue* and *Piety*, to the scandalous Propagation of *Vice* and *Debauchery*. Upon which Reasons are founded those several *Maxims* of the *Civil Law*, that *Exempt* all those that act under a *Command* from the *Guilt* of the *Offence*. And on the same account we find in the *Scriptures* many Instances of very flagrant Sins, committed by some *Ministers of State*, ascrib'd only to the *Supream Power*, under whose *Commission* they acted. A very Convincing Example whereof we read in the dismal Case of *Uriah*, whose Execrable Murther, tho' transacted by *Joab* thro' *David's* Order, was not only charg'd upon the King himself, in his own Words in his *Penitential Psalm* compos'd on that lamentable Occasion, but by the *Holy Ghost* also in the 2d. of *Samuel*, *Thou hast*

12. 9. *hast kill'd Uriah the Hittite with the Sword, and hast slain him with the Sword of the Children of Ammon. Tho' doubtless his Subjects were Guilty of a very heinous Sin, in Obeying their Sovereign's impious Command; yet did God visit that abominable and ungrateful Fact upon the Prince's Head, in a Punishment that wore the Colour of his Crime, and branded his otherwise spotless Character with a Bloody Mark to all Posterity. And so was the Parallel Murther of Naboth both Ascrib'd to, and Expiated in the Persons of Ahab and Jezabel, who remain upon Record as Frightful and Infamous Examples of abus'd Power, Avarice and Usurpation. Where Princes thus presume to force the Consciences of their Subjects, and break in upon their Rights and Laws, not only their Private and Personal, but the Publick and National Crimes will be requir'd at their Hands; and for this reason the Idolatry of the Jews is charg'd upon Jeroboam, for which the Spirit of God has stigmatiz'd his Pedigree to Eternity, in that Odious and Reproachful Character of being the Son of Nebat that made Israel to sin. When Aaron had so far submitted to the impious Request of the People as to Dethrone their God and Sovereign, and change their Glory into the Similitude of a Calf that eateth Hay, we find Moses accusing the High-Priest of their Rebellion and Idolatry, in this sharp Expostulation,*
- What*

What did this People unto thee, that thou hast ^{Exod.} brought so great a Sin upon them? The same Reason ^{32. 31.} will be found to hold good in all Cases of Government, and Authority, which in the very lowest Degree are Offices of Commission, and Trust; lodg'd as the Delegacy, and Vice-Gerency of God, the Fountain of all Power, in the Hands of Magistrates, and Superiors, who stand accountable to him for the Crimes of their Inferiors, in which they are Partakers, and consequently will bear the Load of a double Damnation, when the Souls that are lost thro' their Misconduct are requir'd at their Hands.

II. Secondly, We may be Partakers of other Men's Sins, by Conniving at, Consenting to, or Concealing them. Now the Guilt in this Particular rises in proportion to the Power, and Obligation, that differently binds, or engages Men, according to the Variety of their Circumstances, and Stations, to prevent Vice, and Injustice. By that Rule is to be measur'd the Bulk, and Extent of the Sin; for where a Man has no Power, Jurisdiction, or Obligation to exert that Power, there can be no Communication of the Action: But where we are invested in such Authority, as in the Case of all Publick Offices, and Administrations, or where the Precepts of Humanity, Civil Justice or Religion require us to interpose, and restrain the Com-

C

mission

mission of any vicious Act, either thro' *Carelessness*, and *Negligence*, *Partiality*, or *Impunity* in the One, *Connivance*, *Consent*, or *Concealment* in the Other, they both become *Partakers* of the Crimes committed, in an unfaithful Discharge of their Duties, and a *Tacit Violation* of their Trust, and are not only Responsible for the *present Acts* alone, but also for all the mischievous *Consequences* attending them. For *vicious Customs* steal upon us gradually, and by every fresh Advancement get Ground and Strength, till at last by many multiply'd Acts they *establish* themselves, grow Head-strong, Irresistible, and out of the reach of *Controul* or *Correction*, which the least *Discipline* seasonably apply'd to, in a State of Infirmary, had check'd and suppress'd in their very Birth. *Errors* in *Practice* being like *Absurdities* in *Reasoning*, the Admission of *One Fallacy* will draw a *Thousand* after it. *Neglect*, and want of *Animadversion*, make Delinquents Bold and Impudent, and will bring 'em from *Extenuating*, to *Justifying* their Faults.

A *Tacit Admission* in any One that has the *Right* of *Prohibition*, amounts to an *Approbation* of any thing in the Sense of the whole World, and involves the Person so *Consenting* under a *double Guilt*, both as being a *Party* concern'd in the Sin, and as a *Traitor* of his Authority. *Silence*, where a Man *ought* to speak, is as *Culpable*,

ble, if not more than, an *Actual*, and open *Engagement*. *These things hast thou done, and I held my Tongue, and thou thoughtest that I was even such* ^{Psal. 50. 21.} *an one as thyself*, says the Psalmist, and the Natural Inference most Men are apt to draw from the *Cowardly Compliance*, and base *Obsequiousness* of such as ought to shew their *Power*, and *Principles* to the contrary. He that does not appear in opposition to that which it is his Duty to *prevent*, or *suppress*, must at the least justly be concluded not to be *against* it, according to that *Aphorism* of our *Blessed Saviour*, *He that is not against us, is on our part*, ^{Mar. 9. 40.} which indeed may bear a farther Interpretation, that the Man that acts not *evidently against* any *Party*, or *Design*, is a real *Promoter*, or *Encourager* of it's Interests. For certainly any Person in *Authority* does much more *contribute* to the *Advancement* of Evil by a *Permissive Silence*, and *Passive Forbearance*, than any *Inferior* can in the most vigorous Expression of his *Zeal*, and *Fervency* for it; because by him *Vice* seems to be *Legitimated*, as 'twere *Establish'd* by a *Law*, and to have its currant *Passport* without *Controul* in the World. Thus does He that *Acquiesces in*, *Submits to*, or *Winks at* a Crime that by his *Post* and *Power* he is qualify'd to *Forbid*, *Prevent*, *Redress*, or *Correct*, become *positively Guilty* of that very Crime *himself*, as much as if he had been the *Single*, and *Personal Aggressor*.

Both the *Old*, and *New Testament* abounding with pregnant Examples for the Proof of this Assertion, I shall trouble you with but two drawn out of each, which speak very home to the purpose. The First is that Remarkable, and Notorious Case of old *Eli*, under the joyn't Consideration both of a *Parent*, and *Magistrate*. He, ^{1 Sam. 2.} like a too Indulgent *Father*, and *Governor*, ^{20, &c.} conniv'd at the abominable Transgressions of the *Priests* his *Sons*, who, by turning the very *Temple* into a *Brothel-House*, had made the Sacrifice of the Lord to stink, and his Service Detestable in the sight of the People; and when he ought to have Purg'd the *Church* of such Sanctify'd Villainy, and Executed the severest Punishments that Justice could inflict upon such Hellish Crimes, and as 'twere to have Reconcil'd God to his *Altar*, by the Effusion of his own Guilty Blood upon it, he could not find in his Heart to give them so much as a Rebuke, till the Clamours, and Outcries of the People forc'd him to that Ungrateful Office. And even then too his Corrections were so Soft, and Gentle, so full of silly Fondness, and Dotage, that they rather Encourag'd, than Restrain'd their Odious Impieties. High time was it for God to awake, when his Listless Yawning Vice-Gerent was thus scandalously Drowsy, to vindicate that crying Reproach he had brought upon his *Worship*, and *Honour* by such
Supine

Supine Oscitancy, Sloth and Negligence. Accordingly we find God charging all these monstrous Sins upon the *Old Prophet*, with the highest Exprobation of the blackest *Ingratitude*, and *Injustice*, spurning the useless and unworthy *Dottard* out of his Office, and executing Vengeance upon him, and his whole Posterity, with the utmost Indignation and Disdain.

§. The other Instance we have Recorded by *St. Paul*, in his First *Epistle* to the *Corinthians*, c. 5. wherein he very sharply charges his new Converts as *Partakers* in the foul Sin of the *Incestuous* Person, because they *Conniv'd* at it, and did not positively proceed to Execute the *Church-Censures* upon him, in totally cutting off such a Corrupt and Rotten Member from it's Body. *Ye are puff'd up*, (says he) *and have not rather mourn'd, that he that hath done this Deed might be taken away from among you.* For the Understanding whereof, we must observe that in the *Primitive Ages* of *Christianity*, Excommunication denoted by these Expressions, ἐξαιρίσις ἐκ μέσων ὑμῶν, and καθάρσιν τῆς Σαλᾶνᾶ, being never us'd, but on very great and enormous Occasions, and being justly esteem'd of such a Dreadful and Damnable Consequence, was always attended with the sad Pomp, and mournful Solemnities of a *Funeral*; the *Congregation* were array'd in *Black*, accompanying the *Execution* with Lamentation, and loud Weeping, as o'er
the

the *Spiritual Death* of the Criminal's Soul. So that the *Apostle* here expostulates with the *Corinthians*, as *Encouraging*, and *Sharing* in the Vice, in *Omitting* to Punish it, tho' in such a Severe and Desperate way, wherein *Mercy*, and *Compassion* might be allow'd to take place, if in any Case in the World.

Thus the *Toleration* of any Sin in Others by Persons of *Power*, and *Authority*, *Translates* it back on their *own* Heads, and renders them *actually* Guilty of it. This Assertion must be allow'd Evident and Undeniable in all Instances of *Government*; but then there arises a fresh Question, How far we may be *Partakers* of other Men's Sins in the *private* Intercourse and Affairs of Human Life *betwixt Man and Man*, in Common Conversation? We are certainly oblig'd in *Charity* to bear always an hearty and tender Concern for our Neighbour's Good and Safety, to con-

Heb. 10.

24.

Phil. 2.

4.

Rom. 14.

19. &c.

sider one another, to look not every Man on his own things, but every Man also to the things of others; to Edify one another, to Advise, Warn, Rebuke, and by all other Methods to Promote his Welfare as Occasion serves, or we have opportunity of Maintaining and Propagating the great Interest of Truth, Piety, and Virtue in the World. But on the other hand, do not the same express Injunctions of *Charity*, *Religion*, and *Justice* oblige us with equal Force, and Penalty, to the no less neces-

necessary Duties of *Peace*, and *Quietness*, *Forbearance*, and *Forgiveness*, in *Mercy*, *Compassion*, and *Good-Nature* to *Cover*, and *Conceal* our Brother's Sins, and Infirmities? Do not these as strictly command us not to thrust ourselves *Pragmatically* into his Business, or meddle with those Concerns that do not belong to us, or under the *Sanctify'd Pretence* of *Reformation of Manners*, to turn *Informer*, assume an *Odious* and *Factionous* Office, arrogantly intrench upon Other's *Christian Liberty*, and *Innocence*, and under the Shew of more *Zeal*, and *Purity*, (the most infallible Token of a *Dextrous* and *Refin'd Hypocrite*, and *Knave*) turn the World upside down, and set all Mankind into Quarrels, and Confusions? Now to Reconcile these Differences, and to Steer our Course even between the Limits of *Duty* and *Error*, which indeed is not so easy a Matter precisely in all Instances to do, these three *Conclusions* may help to *solve* most of the Difficulties in the Case before us.

1. *First*, We may be *Partakers of other Men's Sins*, if we do not endeavour to the utmost of our Power to *prevent*, or stop their Commission, when they openly break in upon *Religion*, or assault the *Glory of God*. In this Case we lie under a *Double Obligation* to interpose, in Vindication of the *Divine Honour*, and for the *Eternal Salvation* of our Brother ; both which ought to be
more

more Dear to us, than any other Considerations in the World. When we hear God's Holy and Dreadful Name *Blasphem'd*, his *Being Deny'd*, his *Providence Arraign'd*, his *Goodness Censur'd*, his *Power Contemn'd*, his *Justice Question'd*, his *Mercy Mock'd*, or the *Sacred Mysteries* of our *Faith Vili-fy'd* or *Ridicul'd*, not to stand up in their Defence, and with all the *Courage, Authority, and Argument* we are Masters of, to assert the Glorious Cause of God, and *Truth*, is to *Renounce* our *Allegiance* to One, and *Pretensions* to the Other. In such base, and cowardly *Disloyalty* to God, *Silence* and *Con-nivance* make us *Actual Aggressors* ; not to *Speak*, is to *Approve* ; not to *Act*, is to *Commit* ; not to *Rebuke*, is to *Consent* to ; not to shew our *Dis-pleasure* against, is to have *Complacency* in it, not to *Resent*, is to *Submit* to it ; not to endeavour to *Destroy*, is to *Promote*, the *Kingdom of the Devil*, and to *Side* with the *Powers of Darknesh*. There is no *Trimming Moderation* in this Case, no stand-ing in a *Neutrality* and *Indifference*, we must be *Offensive*, or *Defensive*, and *serve God*, or *Belial*. This is a *Negative Denial of God*, (if I may so speak) and communicates a deep *Share of the Guilt* ; but how much greater then does a *Posi-tive* derive ? When Men out of a *Time-serving Fear*, *Sycophantizing Flattery*, or *Mistaken Com-plaisance*, shall fall in with the *Damnable Humours*, or *Debauch'd Opinions* of *Lewd Sots*, and *Atheists*,
smile

smile at their Smutty, and Prophane *Fests*, tamely hear those *Holy Oracles*, by which we expect to be sav'd, Scofft at, and Derided, and impudently Criticis'd upon, and give an *approving Laugh* to that *Execrable Drollery*, for which the *Speaker's* Tongue ought to be cut out, lest they should displease a *Crew* of Ignorant and Profligate *Infidels*, by shewing *unseasonably* before *Brutes* and *Buffoons*, that they themselves are *Men*, that is, Creatures endu'd with Reason, and Reflection, that are not asham'd of the *God* that made them, and have so much Gratitude as to Own and Vindicate the *Saviour* that *Redeem'd* them. Not to Rebuke such Daring Impieties, (which fly in the Face of Heaven, and call aloud for speedy Vengeance, for *Thunder* and *Earthquakes* to *Blast* and *Swallow* such accursed Miscreants, who thus provoke, and as 'twere anticipate their Damnation) notwithstanding the most powerful and dangerous Oppositions in the World, is, in *Eph. 5.* the *Apostle's* Language, *to have Fellowship with the* ^{11.} *Works of Darknesh*, to associate with *Devils Incarnate*, and to enter into a *Covenant with Death*, and *Isa. 28.* ^{18.} *an Agreement with Hell*, as the *Prophet* elegantly speaks, which such treacherous *Apostates* to their Religion, will at last, to their Eternal Sorrow, find their just Reward hereafter.

2. Secondly, We may be *Partakers of other Men's Sins*, if we do not to the utmost of our Power endeavour to *prevent*, or *obstruct* their

Commission, when they manifestly endanger the Good of the Publick. As we are Members of any Government, or Society, we are All oblig'd, in point of Honour, Interest, and Conscience, to Maintain it's Security, Promote it's Welfare, and Guard it against any Factious Designs, or Seditious Conspiracies, that may Threaten it's Constitution, Discompose it's Peace, or Violate, and Subvert it's Laws. God, and Nature, has invested every Subject from his Cradle with a Commission to Engage, Discover, and Disappoint the Enemies of his Church, and Country; and he that is either Privy to, industriously Conceals, or any ways Abetts, their Schismatical, Illegal, or Rebellious Enterprizes, both in the Eyes of Human, as well as Divine Laws, is an Accomplice, and Partaker in the Guilt, a Traytor to God, and his Prince, a Patron, and Protector of Injustice, and a Common Adversary to Himself, as well as all Mankind.

3. Thirdly, We may partake in other Men's Sins, by Conniving at, or Consenting to, any imminent Danger, or great Injury, that may violently affect the Body, or Soul, the Life, or Estate, Spiritual, or Temporal, of our Neighbour. Where these visibly lie at stake, they demand our Succours, and Common Humanity interests us in their Defence. Where his Innocent Reputation is scandalously Aspers'd, his naked Person openly Assaulted, or Assassinated, his Fortune secretly Struck at, or Undermin'd,

dermin'd, every Man is bound to follow the Example of that *Heroic Champion*, and Deliverer of his Country-men, *Moses*, who, tho' endow'd with such an *Unparell'd Meekness*, as nothing but such an heinous Provocation could disturb, *Seeing one of his Brethren suffering wrong, Defended* Act. 7. *him, and Aveng'd him that was oppress'd, and smote* ^{24.} *the Egyptian.* Otherwise we lie obnoxious to the Imputation of the *Psalmist*, *When thou sawest* Psal. 59. *a Thief, thou consentedst unto him, and hast been* ^{18.} *Partaker with the Adulterers.* He must at least be suppos'd a *Well-wisher* to the Villainy, that can behold it's Commission without *Compassion*, and *Resentment*. St. Paul's meer *standing by*, and *holding the Garments* of St. Stephen's Executioners, was enough to have *Attainted* the *Apostle*, and render'd him *Guilty* of the *Martyr's Blood*. Now if barely *viewing* the Perpetration of a *Corporal Crime* in Others, when we can *obstruct* it, may make us *Malefactors* ourselves, certainly the *Permission* of a *Spiritual* much more, as 'tis of a more dreadful Consequence to the *Better Part* of Man. To prevent which, we are oblig'd to interpose with the most *Fraternal Concern*, gentle *Admonition*, tender *Reproof*, kind *Advice*, and insinuating *Persuasion*, still with a cautious and due Consideration of *Time*, of *Place*, and of *Person*. But if these *Friendly Overtures* cannot prevail, we have *wash'd our Hands* of the Guilt, and stand

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19. 17.

Acquitted before God, and our Conscience ; but without them, we are positively said even in the *Mosaic Law*, to *suffer Sin upon him*, and consequently liable to *partake* of the *Penalty*. But however we must strictly observe, that these Duties are always confin'd to *Overt Acts*, and *Visible Cases* ; for *Religion* has left in this Matter a wide Room for the right Exercise of our *Prudence*, and *Discretion* ; for it does not oblige us to charge Men at random, upon bare *Surmise*, and *Suspicion*, or to pry officiously into their *Lives*, and *secret Affairs*, and to invade their *private Rights* by usurping a *Jurisdiction*, which we have no *Title* to *justify*, or with a rude Air of *Superiority*, to obtrude ourselves upon 'em as *Privy-Counselors*, and *Dogmatically Censure*, *Rebuke*, or *Advise* in our Neighbour's Proceedings, that don't belong to us, neither lie under the Verge of our Cognizance. Whatever Godly, and fallacious *Glosses* such troublesome *Wasps*, that erect themselves into *Illegal Inquisitions*, may cast upon their Actions, they are doubtless the unwarrantable Effects of an Idle, Incroaching, Impertinent, and *Medling Curiosity*, a Vice as contrary to the true, Generous *Spirit of Christianity*, as 'tis to *Good-Manners*, and *Justice*. It is in short the base Product of *Ill-Nature*, *Spiritual Pride*, *Censoriousness*, and *Sanctify'd Spleen*, pretending to carry on the Blessed Work of *Reformation* by *Lying*,
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Slandering, Whispering, Backbiting, and Tale-bearing, the most express *Character* of the Devil, who is *Emphatically* styl'd the *Grand Accuser of the Brethren*. No wonder therefore that St. Paul has so severely stigmatiz'd these *Busie-bodies in other Men's Matters*, these ἄλλοθ' αὐτοεπίσκοποι that presume to exercise the *Office, and Discipline* of a *Bishop* in other Men's *Provinces* (as the *Original* may be render'd) whom he justly ranks with *Murderers*, ^{1 Pet 4} *Thieves*, and *Malefactors*, as the most proper Persons to keep one another Company.

III. I come now to the *Third General Head* propos'd, namely, that *We may partake in other Men's Sins, by administring Counsel, Direction, or Assistance towards them*. It is almost impossible that any *Great Act* of Villainy should be carry'd on, and accomplish'd by any *One Single Person*; there must be *Cooperators, Partners, and Underworkers* in it, who, like the several *Actors* in a well-form'd *Tragedy*, must contribute their various *Parts* to the *main Body* of the *Action*, and all *Conspire, and Unite* in the *Fatal Catastrophe*. Few Men, tho' of the most exalted *Genius, Reach, and Depth*, have in *themselves*, either *Heads, or Hearts* sufficient, *Power, Conduct, or Policy*, to *Contrive, Manage, and Compleat* an *Elaborate, and Consummate Piece of Sin*, a Sin of *Bulk, Figure, and Extent*: there must be many *Hands* employ'd,
many

many *Confederates* let into, and trusted with the *Secret*, any One whereof *Miscarrying*, may endanger the *Best-projected Plot* in Nature. Therefore the *Grand Deceiver of Mankind* is careful to pick out his *Privy-Council*, Men of shrewd *Dexterity*, and *Cunning*, well vers'd in all his *Artificial Wiles*, and subtle *Stratagems*, that with *fair Countenances*, and *smooth Tongues*, can *Hypocritically Blanch*, and *Palliate* the most *Odious*, and *Deform'd Iniquities*, and *slily* insinuate them into the *Weak and Undiscerning*. *Abfalom* must have his *Achitophel*, *Job* his *Bosom-Serpent*, his *Wife*, *Judas* his *Sanhedrim* ; that under the sacred, and endearing *Pretence of Friendship*, for the *Gratification* of their *Ambition*, *Pleasure*, or *Avarice*, must persuade the One to *Rebel*, entice the Other to *Renounce his God*, and *Bribe* the *Third* to *Betray* his very *Saviour*. Now certainly these *Agents*, and *Sollicitors* in the *Devil's Cause*, who *Advise*, *Direct*, or *Promote* it, are to be consider'd not only as the *Allies*, but as *principal Sharers* in the *Sin*, whether they bring about their *Designs* by skillfully applying to the *Humours*, *Affections*, or *Interests* of the Person *Betray'd*, or by *Importunity*, and the winning *Charms of Address*, enforc'd by proper *Arguments*, *Objects*, and *Occasions to Catch*, and *Insure* an *Unguarded Heart*. Nay further, He that thus *Inveigles* any Person, and *Seduces* him against the *Reluctance* of his *Conscience*, by
Menaces,

Menaces, or Sollicitations, must be concluded under a deeper Imputation of Guilt, than the very Actor himself, as those Words of our Saviour seem positively to infer, as 'twere a little in Excuse of that Corrupt, and Self-condemn'd Judge, Pontius Pilate, overborn by the Clamours, and Outrage of the tumultuous Jews, into the most Villainous, most Execrable Sentence, upon the Justest, and Innocentest Person in the World, even against all Convictions of the most undeniable Truth, and Reason. He that deliver'd me nnto thee, hath the Job. 19. *greater Sin, which does assert the Traytor more a* 11. *Son of Perdition, than the False Condemner himself. So highly are we oblig'd in the Words of Jacob to beseech God to keep us free from any Communion with these Instruments of Cruelty, O my Soul,* Gen. 49. *come not thou into their secret, unto their Assembly* 5, 6. *mine Honour be not thou united. Now if bare Counsel, or Assistance can Entitle us to any Sin before its Commission, certainly,*

IV. *Fourthly, We may also become Partakers of it, in Commending, Approving, Excusing, or Defending it afterwards. In this Case a Man contracts the Guilt of a Prior Action, he sins by Precedent, and derives Another's Transgression upon Himself by his Assent to it. These are the Patrons, and Advocates of Satan's Court, who' tho' they dare not Personally appear in the Crime, yet*
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are his faithful *Friends* in the *Justification* of it. We may frequently observe many of the *Crafty*, *Time-serving Politicians* of this World, to act always in *Publick* on the *Reserve*, and never to declare their *Opinions*, and *Principles*, to keep Mankind in *suspense*, and hold their Adversaries at a *parry*, but never fail to fall in with the *Party*, and close with the *Victorious* side, when their Interest lies sure, and open. They are content till that, to act *behind the Curtain*, see *Others* expos'd to Difficulties, and Dangers, and draw the *Tools* in with *Flattering Panegyrics*, that they may reap the Fruit of their Labours. Such Men are as much in their *Thoughts*, and *Imaginations* engag'd in the Sin, however they may fancy themselves Secure, and Innocent, in this miserable *Salvo*, of not being *Actual*, and *Direct Aggressors* in it. Tho' it must be confess'd to be impossible for any one to do as much with his *Heart*, and *Inclinations*, as he can with his *Hand*, and *Purse*, yet considering the *Cause* which may restrain him, which perhaps is only *Cowardice*, *Fear of Success*, or *Want of Opportunity*, he may become *Partaker* of the *Guilt*, by the malicious *Intentions* of his Mind, and the *Depravation* of his *Will*, by which the *Malignity* of any *Crime* is to be *measur'd*, and God will judge us at the *Last Day*. The *Scribe's*, and *Pharisee's* Hypocritical Profession of their Innocency, was not sufficient to exempt

empt them from the Imputation of their *Fore-father's Murder*, and *Sacriledge*, whilst they retain'd, and abetted their *Principles*, upon which that severe Woe is denounc'd upon them, Because ye build the *Tombs of the Prophets*, and garnish *the Sepulchres of the Righteous*, and say, if we had *Mat. 23. 29, &c.* been in the Days of our Fathers, we would not have been Partakers with them in the Blood of the Prophets. Wherefore ye be Witnesses unto yourselves that ye are the Children of them which kill'd the Prophets. Fill ye up then the Measure of your Fathers, ye Serpents, ye Generation of Vipers, how can ye escape the Damnation of Hell? If therefore we may thus by the secret Approbation of our Judgment of any Crime contract it's Guilt, certainly much more by Commending, Excusing, Extenuating, or Defending it, which not only justifies Evil, but Encourages, and Confirms Men in the Practice of it; and has so much more Malignity in it's Nature, in that neither Temptation, or Infirmary can be pleaded in it's behalf. Nay farther, St John asserts, that the very Wish of Success towards it, can render the Speaker an Accomplice. If there come any unto you *Eph. 2. 10, 11.* (says he) and bring not this Doctrine, Receive him not into your House, neither bid him God-speed; For he that biddeth him God-speed, is Partaker of his evil Deeds. Where we see that even a bare Entertainment, Civil Salutation, or a Flattering Compliment bestow'd upon any Person, relating to the Vices,

or *Errors* wherein he is engag'd, *Actually* makes them *Ours*, and derives the same Guilt on our own Heads. St. Paul carries this *Critical Case of Conscience* even yet to an higher Extremity, and tells us, that a meer *Complacency in Other's Sin*, *Appropriates* it to Us. For in his *Epistle to the Romans*. c. 1. after having recounted the most horrible Catalogue of Sins, that Human Nature can be Guilty of in the utmost State of *Corruption*, he concludes all with that *Superlative Degree* of it, that *Last finishing Stroke*, and (if I may be allow'd so to speak) *Hyperbole* of Iniquity, in this *Consummate*, and Dreadful Character, *Who knowing the Judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of Death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.* Thus a Man, by a Grateful *Reflection* upon, and a Wilful *Propensity* to Vice, may be Guilty of all the *Mischief*, and *Calamity*, all the *Villainy*, and *Debauchery* that was ever committed by Mankind; and by the Help of a *Lively Memory*, and a *Lewd Imagination*, Spiritually act over all the most Flagitious, and Heinous Impieties, that the Soul is capable of *Representing*, the Devil of *Suggesting*, and the United *Annals of Historians Recording*. He may be the very *Reverse* of his *Blessed Saviour* (of whom he so desperately stands in need) not only *Bear*, but be positively Guilty of, the *Sins of the whole World*. Thus we may partake of Other Men's Crimes, by a *Phantastical Delight* in them. V.

V. *Fifthly, We may partake in other Men's Sins, by giving Offence, or scandalous Example. As Men are Members of Society, they stand Responsible not only for the Positive Legality of their Actions, as consider'd in themselves, and their own Natures, solely with respect to the Subject-Matter of them, but also for their Relative Consequences, as they may affect the Consciences of Others, to which we are bound by the Laws of Charity to give no Violation, Disturbance, or Occasion of Transgressing; and in all our Deportment to consult not only it's Lawfulness, but it's Decency, and Expediency, with regard to our Brethren, against whom we may Sin (as St. Paul says, in the admirable State of this Case, 1 Cor. 8. 10.) and wound their weak Consciences, and sin against Christ. Thus the Abuse even of an Innocent Liberty cannot be Justify'd by a good Intention, and we are liable to Answer for the Fall of those to whom we become a Stumbling-block, and a Rock of Offence. And if we are thus Obnoxious for the Consequences of even our Lawful Actions, how much higher will the Obligation rise in the Ill Effects of those that are really in themselves Unlawful? Here we propagate our Malignity, spread our Infection like a Walking Pestilence, communicate our Poysonous Influence to all about us, and transgress as 'twere by Proxy. Number, and Example carry a much more Controlling Evidence,*

than the *Demonstrations* of Reason, and Argument. For these are visible to the Eye, and strike quicker, and deeper, upon the *Imagination*, than *Principles*, and *Speculations* upon the Understanding ; which is *deceiv'd*, and hurry'd away with a Desire of Imitation, and is apt to deduce, and frame *Rules* by *Examples*, instead of *Examples* by *Rules*; especially where they fall in with the corrupted Inclinations of Nature, and have the Advantage of being well Recommended, they scarce fail to *shock* the most *constant* Virtue, to *confirm* those that are already in a vicious Course, and *pervert* weak, and unstable Persons into *Sin* and *Error*, who have not their *Senses* exercis'd, to discern betwixt Good, and Evil. And thus, whether we follow, or lead Others, we both ways become *Partakers* of their *Sins*. In the first Case the *Temptation* is very strong, and without God's preventing Grace almost Irresistible : For a Man must have a steady Government over Himself, and his Passions, together with an *Inflexible* Eye fixt on his Duty, and an unshaken Contempt of the World, and it's Flatteries, and Censures, he must be *stanch* in his Resolutions, and Master of his Conduct, neither to be corrupted by Shame, Hopes, or Fears, that is not born down in a Throng, and sunk in the Tide of Popular Authority. For when once Vice gets into Fashion, it makes Religion look Singular, and Uncreditable. On the other hand, let but a *Man of Figure*, and

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Character, of Interest, and Quality, lead the way, how many implicit, and fawning Profelytes will follow the Temporizing Courtier, like Beasts in a Track, with a resign'd Understanding to give up their Creed, abandon their Old Friends, with their unprofitable Principles, Caress their most Implacable Enemies, and Betray, and Sacrifice both Church, and State to their insatiable Lust, Pride, Avarice, and Ambition! Such a Man, like Lucifer, must Fall with, and Damn his Legions, and like him too, be accountable for all the Villainy, Treachery, and Rebellion, into which his Hellish Example seduc'd them.

VI. *Lastly, We may be Partakers of other Men's Sins, by Authorizing, Propagating, or Publishing any Heresy, False Doctrin, Schism, Faction, Irreligion, or Immorality. For these Corrupt, and Debauch Men's Minds; and consequently Influence, and Pervert their Lives. For 'tis very rarely seen, that wicked Principles lie still, and dormant in the Conscience, and not exert, and shew themselves in Action: And he that lays the Poyson is the Cause of his Death who swallows it. He that puts a Cheat, and Lye upon Another, leads him Hoodwinkt into Falshood, and Mistake; and when once a Man is got into Error, he goes Headlong, and Blindfold into Perdition. There is a strange Infatuation, and as 'twere sort of Witchcraft in False Doctrin,*

Doctrin, that unaccountably *besots*, and *stupifies* the *Reason*; and scarce was there ever any *Broach'd*, however *Impious*, or *Absurd*, but found some *Patrons*, and *Profelytes*, to Believe, and Maintain it. Are not therefore all the vile *Enormities*, that are the *Natural Product* of Wild, Licentious, and *Enthusiastick* *Opinions*, to be charg'd back upon the *Original Author*, in whom they must all *Center*, and *Conterminate*, as in that *Root of Bitterness* from whence they sprung? *Heterodoxy*, and *Blasphemy*, *Lewdness*, and *Prophaneness*, are of such a *Black*, and *Frightful* Complexion in themselves, that represented in their *Native Deformity*, they would gain few *Votaries* in the World: Therefore these *Spiritual Pandars* in Iniquity cover the odious *Monster* with *Artificial Guises*, and *Dissembl'd Colours*, to make it look *Amiable*, and *Engaging*. And when *Sophistry*, and *False Wit* cloath the *Fallacy*, they easily Seduce, and Beguile the Ignorant, and Vicious; and Men are oftentimes tempted to swallow that *Diet* for the *Sauce*, which they would otherwise *Loath*, and *Nauseate*. When the *Directors of Men's Consciences* turn *Impostors*, and *Betray*, and *Mislead* them into those Sins they should teach them to avoid, such *Pernicious Infidelity* to their *Sacred Office*, ought justly to Entitle them, to all those repeated *Woes*, denounc'd by God and Christ against those *False Prophets*, and *Pharisaical Doctors*, who per-

perverted the *Divine Law*, and made even the *Blessed Word of God*, the sad Instrument of *Damnation* to Mankind.

Thus in all these *Instances*, we see there is an *Union*, or as 'twere *Confederacy* in Vice, it joyns hand in hand, and draws out into *Leagues*, and *Combinations*; it's *Contagion* spreads like a *Leprosy*; there's no *Breathing* in it's *Air* with *Safety*; we cannot look on it without endangering our *Health*, and *Innocence*, nor touch it without *Uncleaness*, and *Pollution*. In all these *Cases* there is a *Communication* of *Guilt* both *Backward*, and *Forward*, whereby we become *Partakers* of *Other Men's Sins*. In the *Commander*, *Parent*, or *Governor*, it *Recoils* upon the *Person* in *Authority*, basely *Abusing* his *Power*, *Prostituting* the *Vice-Gerency* of *God* to execrable *Purposes*, *Betraying* his *Sacred Trust*, and *Commission*, and *Violating* his *Faith*, and *Honour*. In *Conniving* at, *Consenting* to, or *Concealing* those *Impieties*, we ought to *Punish*, *Prevent*, or *Restrain*, we are positively *Accessory* to their *Commission*, by a *Tacit Approbation*, and a *Conscious*, and *Cowardly Forbearance*. By administering *Counsel*, *Direction*, or *Assistance* towards them, we act the Part of the *Tempter* himself, *instigating* *Evil*, and promoting the *Kingdom of Darkness*, and the *Destruction* of our *Fellow-Creatures*. In *Commending*, *Approving*, or *Defending* any *Crime*, we *Appropriate* it to ourselves, *Transgress* at second

cond hand, become the *Guardians* of Iniquity, and commence the *Devil's Champions*, to fight his *Battles*, and maintain his *Cause*, and represent him in the most detestable Quality of his Nature, a *Delight* in the *Dishonour* of *God*, and the *Misery*, and *Ruin* of Mankind. In *Giving Offence* by our *Actions*, we *use our Liberty* for a *Cloak of Maliciousness*, and make what would be otherwise *Innocent*, *Culpable*. By a *Scandalous Life*, and *Example*, we derive a *Reproach* upon our *Holy Profession*, and must answer for all those that are seduc'd by it's baleful, and infectious Influence. By *Instilling*, or *Propagating Heterodox, Schismatical, Atheistical Factious*, or *Immoral Principles* into Others, we turn meer *Anti-Christ*s, and *Emissaries of Hell*, and must answer for all the *Souls* that *perish thro' our Treachery, Guile, or Delusion*.

Give me now leave very Briefly, and by way of *Application* of this whole Discourse, to urge *One* or *Two* Particular Motives, to Deter us from falling under this great and dangerous Guilt of *Partaking in Other Men's Sins*.

1. The *First* may be drawn from the Consideration of that *heavy Burthen* of Guilt, which lies upon every Man's *own Conscience*, too Great to need the *Additional Weight* of Others. That in itself (*God knows*) is enough to *sink* us, without his *Infinite Mercy*, and the *All-atoning Merits* of our *Saviour*. Now if the *Malignity* but of the
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least, *single Transgression*, without that, can consign us over to *Eternal Perdition*, if as the *Scriptures*, and our own wretched *Experience* convince us, that even a *Just Man falls seven times a day*, what a *Fearful Reckoning* is He like to make, who besides his own immense *Summ*, almost without *Number*, or *Bounds*, stands *Chargeable* for such a long, and *frightful Catalogue of Other Men's Sins*? Can he by any means (to use the *Elegant Expression* of the *Psalmist*) *Redeem his Brother*, or give to God a *Ransom for his Soul*, that he has thus plung'd into *Misery*, and seduc'd into *Ruin*? Can he be a *Mediator for Another*, that so much wants the *Intercession* of One for *Himself*? And if the *Righteous* can scarcely be sav'd, where shall this *Ungodly*, this *Over-grown*, this *Exorbitant Sinner*, laden with *Iniquity*, appear? Therefore,

2. Secondly, The vast *Extent*, and *Duration*, with the *infinite*, lamentable *Consequences*, of this *Method* of *Sinning*, should *Caution*, and *Deter* us from falling into it. All other *Crimes* lie under some *Limitation*; they are at an *End*, or *Die* with the *Man*: But here a *Man's Sin survives his Funeral*; and even when *he is Dead*, *he Sinneth*. He that *Propagates*, or *Publishes* any pernicious *Writings*, or *Tenets*, knows not how far their *Poyson* will reach, or where the *Deadly Contagion* will stop. It is an *Epidemical Evil*, a *National Calamity*, an *Everlasting Plague*, that has slain it's *Thousands*,

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and

and it's ten *Thousands*, that in the hands of that *Destroying Angel*, the *Devil*, can taint whole *Families*, and *Kingdoms*, and transmit it's *Venom* down to *Posterity*, and continue *Spiritual Death* to the *End of the World*. How do those *Execrable Miscreants*, *Arrius*, and *Socinus*, tho' so many *Years Rotten* in their *Graves*, still *stink* above *Ground*, and live agen in an *Hellish Transmigration* of their *Damnable Blasphemies*, and *Heresies*! How do they now *Crucifie the Son of God afresh*, make him *Die daily*, and put him to an *open*, and *continu'd Shame*! How do those *Atheistical Monsters*, *Hobbes*, and *Spinoza*, in their *Accursed Books*, and *Profelytes*, still *deny the God that made them*, and *anull the Covenant*, whereby we are *seal'd unto the day of Redemption*! What a *Magazine of Sin*, what an *Inexhaustible Fund of Debauchery*, and *Destruction*, does any *Author of Heresie*, *Schism*, or *Immorality* set up! Which tho' perhaps they may appear at first as *Trifling*, and *Inconsiderable*, will like *Elisba's Cloud*, from being no bigger than a *Man's Hand*, gradually increase, till they fill the *Heavens with Darknes*, *Thunder*, and *Tempest*. Who would have thought; *Threescore Years* ago, that the *Romantick*, and silly *Enthusiasms*, of such an *Illiterate*, and *Scandalous Wretch* as *Fox*, should in the small *Compass* even of our *Memory* gain such mighty *Ground*, *Captivate* so many *Fools*, and *Damn'em* with *Diabolical*

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cal Inspiration, and Non-sensial Cant? Or to go higher, Who would have imagin'd that Two or Three *Jesuits* in *Masquerade* crept into a *Conventicle*, should sow those *Schismatical Seeds of Faction, and Rebellion*, that in a few Years should rise to that *Prodigious Degree*, as to be able to *grasp the Crown, contend with the Scepter*, and not only *Threaten*, but *Accomplish the Downfal* both of *Church and State*? But how were these *Numbers* rais'd, and this *Mischief* with such *amazing Success* carry'd on? Was it not by the many *Wild, Latitudinarian, Extravagant Opinions*, and *Bewitching False Doctrins*, the *Impudent Clamours*, the *Lying Misrepresentations*, the *Scandalous*, and *False Libels*, both upon the *King*, and the *Church*, that every Day were *Trumpeted* out of the *Pulpit*, and the *Press*, those *Mints of Atheism, and Irreligion*, that then *Poyson'd* the Nation, and *Besotted* it into it's own *Ruin*? And are not the *same Hands* at work agen, and the *same Villainous Methods* pursu'd? Were ever such *Outrageous Blasphemies* against *God*, and all *Religion, Natural*, as well as *Reveal'd*, vented *Publickly with Impunity*, in any *Christian Church, or Kingdom* in the whole *World*, as at present in our own? (be it spoken to our *Shame*, and if not remedy'd to our *Confusion*) for if they fail of the *same Effect*, not to *Embroid* us agen in *Blood*, and *Ruin*, it can be owing to nothing but *God's Infinite*, but *Unmerited Mercy*, and *Long-Suffering*, that we are not utterly *Consum'd*.

Lastly, This Manner of *Sinning* ought with a more peculiar *Diligence* to be avoided, because 'tis what without the *Super-Natural Assistance* of the *Divine Grace*, we can never *Repent* of, and for which consequently we can never be *Forgiven*. All *Sins intail Damnation* upon the *Offendor*, but *This* almost with an inevitable *Necessity*. For besides that before we can arrive to this *sad Degree* of *Impiety*, we must quite have *Extinguish'd* the *Light* of our *Consciences*, and the *Power* of
God's

God's Spirit upon them, it happens, *First*, that we can have no thorough Knowledge of the Extent of this Sin, it being Communicated so unsuspectedly, and at such a Distance. And, *Secondly*, that it is a Crime, for the Injury whereof we can never make Reparation, or Restitution to the Person seduc'd into it, and consequently obtain no Compleat, and Acceptable Repentance for it's Guilt. And tho' it could be suppos'd, that we should Repent of it Ourselves, yet the Unhappy Persons we have Betray'd, may be either so firmly settled in their Errors, as to be incapable of Conviction, or gon into an Unchangeable State, and so out of the Reach of being Reclaim'd. Certainly, if there be any Sin in the World, that does more eminently carry the Image, and Superscription of the Devil upon it, it is this, and what will infallibly inherit his severest Punishments. If there are Different Degrees of Glory in Heaven, as the Apostle tells us, and by Analogy we may conclude, that there are different Degrees of Torment in Hell, according to the Size, and Quality of the Offendor, no Mansion in that Dismal Place will be too Bad for such Excessive, and Abominable Criminals; where were they to meet with no other Aggravation to their Misery, but that of Beholding, and Conversing with so many Wretched Objects, whom they brought into that Place of Torment, it would heat the Furnace seven times hotter, add Fury to Hell-Flames, and a Double Weight to their Damnation. Now from this Tremendous Sin, which no Good Man can think of, without Horror, or speak of, without Trembling,

Good Lord Deliver Us.

F I N I S.



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Sacheverell, Henry
The communication of sin

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